

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 02420 290419Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

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PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01 SY-05

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R 280320Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1809

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR IN NP

SUBJECT: NEPAL'S ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL

REF: KATHMANDU 1011

1. SUMMARY. NEPALESE OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY HAS REPORTED THAT CONSULATIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL ON KING'S PROPOSAL THAT NEPAL BE DECLARED ZONE OF PEACE. STATEMENT ISSUED IN WAKE OF INDIAN PRESS STORIES THAT FOREIGN MINISTER ARYAL HAD SINGLED OUT INDIA FOR BEING NON-RESPONSIVE TO PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MEETING WITH VISITING INDIAN JOURNALISTS MAY 23 FOREIGN MINISTER ARYAL RESPONDED TO QUERIES ON STATUS OF KING'S CORONATION PROPOSAL THAT NEPAL BE DECLARED "ZONE OF PEACE." ARYAL IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH NEPAL HAD TRIED TO EXPLAIN "CERTAIN BASIC POINTS," NEPAL WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY IF INDIA HAD BEEN FIRST COUNTRY TO RESPOND

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PAGE 02 KATHMA 02420 290419Z

TO PROPOSAL.

3. ARYAL'S COMMENTS WERE PICKED UP BY INDIAN PRESS AND INTERPRETED AS CRITICAL OF GOI. TIMES OF INDIA, FOR EXAMPLE, HEADLINED STORY "NEPAL RAPS INDIA." OTHER PAPERS AVAILABLE HERE HAVE PICKED UP THEME THAT ARYAL USED OCCASION OF MEETING WITH INDIAN JOURNALISTS TO CHIDE GOI FOR SILENCE ON PROPOSAL.

4. RSS MAY 28 ISSUED CAREFUL STATEMENT TO BELIE THESE NEWS STORIES. QUOTING "KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES" STORY STATES THAT CONSULTATIONS ON ZOP WERE BEING HELD BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS "FROM TIME TO TIME AT DIFFERENT LEVELS." GON HAS PROVIDED INDIA CLARIFICATION ON MOST POINTS THAT HAVE COME UP DURING CONSULTATIONS BUT STANDS READY TO CLARIFY OTHERS IF NEED BE. IN VIEW OF FACT THAT INDIA IS "CLOSE AND FRIENDLY COUNTRY" IT WAS NATURAL THAT GON EXPECTED IT TO BE AMONG FIRST TO UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT ZOP CONCEPT.

5. COMMENT: RSS STATEMENT IS OBVIOUS EFFORT TO REDUCE IMPACT OF ARYAL COMMENT BEFORE IT WAS EXAGGERATED BY THOSE IN INDIA OR NEPAL ANXIOUS TO MAGNIFY POINTS OF DIFFERENCE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY FORMAL BILATERAL "CONSULTATIONS" ON PEACE PROPOSAL, ALTHOUGH IN COURSE OF HIS NORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH GON OFFICIALS, INDIAN AMBASSADOR HAS RAISED SUBJECT. WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING DELHI CAN OFFER IN THIS REGARD.

6. USSR FOR ITS PART CONTINUES TO BACK AWAY FROM IMPROMPTU (AND UNAUTHORIZED) STATEMENT OF SUPPORT GIVEN PROPOSAL BY HEAD OF SOVIET CORONATION DELEGATION. IN FAREWELL CALL ON CHARGE SOVIET AMBASSADOR KIRNASOVSKY SAID THAT SOVIET UNION, WHILE OBVIOUSLY SUPPORTING CONCEPT OF PEACE IN SOUTH ASIA IN GENERAL AND NEPAL IN PARTICULAR WAS RESERVING FINAL JUDGMENT ON PROPOSAL UNTIL SPECIFICS WERE AVAILABLE OF WHAT GON HAD IN MIND. MFA OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAD TALKED HAVE MADE FAIRLY CLEAR THAT NO DETAILS WILL BE FORTHCOMING UNTIL GENERAL INDIAN SUPPORT IS OBTAINED RECOGNIZING THAT WITHOUT IT PROPOSAL IS NOT LIKELY TO TAKE EFFECTIVE SHAPE.

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PAGE 03 KATHMA 02420 290419Z

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